DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 406 344 SP 037 235

AUTHOR	Andrews, Lanna
TITLE	Diversity: Changing Perspectives Using Case-Based Methods.
PUB DATE	97
NOTE	7p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (49th, Phoenix, AZ, February 26-March 1, 1997).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Case Studies; Cultural Pluralism; Education Courses; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; Multicultural Education; Preservice Teacher Education; *Problem Solving; Student Teachers; *Student Teaching; *Teacher Education Programs; Teaching Methods; *Theory Practice Relationship; *Transfer of Training
IDENTIFIERS	*Case Method (Teaching Technique); *Diversity (Student)

ABSTRACT

The case method is a popular teaching tool that can be applied to training for diversity and particularly the preparation of general education teachers for the inclusion of diverse learners in their classrooms. Case-based methodology teacher training activities focus on actual classroom experiences and prompt reflection and personal involvement. A study was done to validate these techniques with 56 student teachers in 2 groups. One group used a problem-solving strategy to analyze differing case features. This strategy group did 40 percent better on case problem-solving than those solving case problems without the strategy. A comparison was made of the identification of features with problem-solving scores to determine if the strategy was the determining factor, and a high positive correlation was found. The case method of teaching was found to promote classroom problem-solving when cases are systematically varied and when student teachers are given a strategy that guides transfer of learning from case to case. This demonstrates that student teachers can be trained to transfer learning from one teaching problem to another involving a diverse population of students. (Contains 8 references.) (JLS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 406 344

DIVERSITY: CHANGING PERSPECTIVES USING CASE-BASED METHODS

A Paper presented at the
49th Annual Meeting
of the
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

by

Lanna Andrews, Ed.D
Assistant Professor
University of San Francisco
2130 Fulton Street
San Francisco CA 94117-1980
(415) 666-2099

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Andrews

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

SP037035

Diversity: Changing Perspectives Using Case-Based Methods

Since diversity is a term that accurately describes classrooms in today's urban centers, teacher trainers are charged with preparing novice teachers to meet the challenge (Grossman, 1995). This paper discusses the use of a popular teaching tool, the case method, and how it can be applied to training for diversity. Emphasis will be on the preparation of general education teachers for the inclusion of diverse learners into their classrooms. Topics to be covered include: (1) integration of cases into college curricula to promote cultural responsiveness; (2) use of varied techniques with the case method, such as cooperative learning, reflective writing, interactive discussion, problem-solving strategies; (3) and results of an empirical study incorporating all the above to promote diversity, completed in four sections of a Mainstreaming Course with general education teacher trainees.

Theoretical Framework

Discourse about culturally responsive curriculum takes place within the context of debate about a larger issue, the validity and shape of a multicultural approach to education. A widely held view of multicultural or culturally responsive curricula sees them as strategies for improving performance and enhancing self esteem among students whose racial, ethnic, or language differs from that of the Anglo-European population (Lubeck, 1988). This proposal takes the view that self esteems comes from inclusive practices in the classroom (Villa and Thousand, 1995). These include awareness and value of differences along with the realization that similarities are equally important, especially when designing curriculum. In addition, teachers must be trained to notice similarities and differences in order to transfer learning from

typical situations to solve atypical problems such as those arising due to diversity (Andrews, 1994).

Case-Based methodology teacher training activities focus on real classroom experiences rather than precept. Cases prompt reflection and personal involvement. they allow teachers to examine large-scale problems closely (Merseth, 1991). Thus cases are a vehicle for allowing student teachers to question their own instructional practices, classroom management strategies, curriculum, and attitudes.

Educational Importance

Recent projections have estimated that minorities in the US will comprise one-third of the population (Grossman, 1995). Currently the majority of teachers are white females, which stands in sharp contrast to the students they will teach. Also, the Individuals With Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act have mandated that students be placed in the least restrictive environment. This is resulting in full inclusion of disabled children into general education classrooms (Stainback and Stainback, 1995). Therefore, teacher education programs need to train student teachers to deal with learner diversity.

The Carnegie Report (1986) recommended that teacher training institutions use a case-based curriculum to illustrate a "great variety of teaching problems" while preparing fledgling teachers for the experience of today's diverse classrooms. Teacher educators claim positive effects of various case method approaches with student teachers, but there is little empirical data supporting these claims (Kleinfeld, 1991). The following study begins to supply empirical evidence for the use of the case method to train for inclusion.

Empirical Research

The study measured the effects of using cases designed to increasingly vary in complexity and diversity (by ethnicity and handicapping condition) with general education student teachers. The premise of the study is that student teachers learn excellent practices but must be trained to transfer this learning from a general education framework to an expanded view that includes all types of learners. The key features of the study are:

- The development of systematically varied teaching cases, ranging from a less complex, familiar teaching setting in the first case to settings of cultural and linguistic diversity, including increasingly disabled students, in subsequently given cases.

- The classroom management problem-solving emphasis of the cases, intended to expand the preservice teachers' ability to apply classroom management course learning to varied and complex problems in practical situations.

- The use of a problem-solving strategy that assisted student teachers to expect case variations and to use critical features as cues to transfer prior knowledge to new, diverse, classroom management problems.

- The combined use of written teacher reflection, cooperative learning groups (heterogeneously balanced for amount of student teaching and experience with bilingual and disabled learners), and whole class discussion to analyze and solve cases.

- The design and use of a case problem-solving assessment tool that measures transfer of learning from one case to another as the cases increased in complexity and diversity.

The Main components and results of the study are as follows:

- Fifty-six student teachers formed two treatment groups. Both groups received the same cases and used identical methods (reflection, cooperative learning, and whole group case analysis) solve increasingly diverse cases. One group receiving the treatment used a problem-solving strategy to analyze differing case features. The strategy group did 40% better on case problem-solving than those solving case problems without the strategy.
- Since the strategy guided the student teachers to compare the critical features of the varying cases, the study compared the identification of features with problem-solving scores to see if the strategy was the factor influencing problem-solving. There was a high correlation between the ability to pinpoint the case critical features and the ability to problem-solve the cases for subjects in both groups (r=.86). Thus the awareness and comparison of deep structural features in teaching problems have an effect, causing teachers to use prior knowledge to solve novel and diverse case problems.

This study shows that the case method of teaching promote classroom problem-solving when cases are systematically varied and student teachers are given a strategy that guides transfer of learning from case to case. Since the case variation involved increasingly diverse ethnic and disability group populations, this positive data empirically demonstrates that student teachers can be trained to transfer learning from one teaching problem to another involving a diverse population of students. These results should be of particular interest to teacher educators faced with training teachers to meet the varying needs of diverse groups, consisting of multicultural, bilingual learners and "included" special education students.

REFERENCES

Andrews, L. (1994). Promoting Problem-Solving Transfer: Effects of Systematically Training Student Teachers to Expect Case Variations. Doctoral Dissertation, University of San Francisco.

Carnegie Commission. (1986). *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy.

Grossman, H. (1995). *Special education in Diverse Society*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Klienfeld, J. (1991). Changes in Problem-Solving Abilities of Students Taught Through Case Methods. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL., April 3-7. 1991).

Lubeck, S. (1988). Nested Contexts. In L.Weiss (Ed.), *Class, Race, and Gender in American Education* . Albany: State University of New York Press.

Merseth, K. (1991). *The Case for Cases in Teacher Education*. Washington, D.C.: AACTE Publications.

Stainback & Stainback (1995). Contemplating Inclusive Eaducation from a Historical Perspective. In Villa & Thousand (Eds.),pp.16-27, *Creating an Inclusive School*. Alexandria, Virginia: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Villa, R. & Thousand, J. (1995). The Rationales for Creating Inclusive Schools. In Villa & Thousand (Eds.),pp.28-44, *Creating an Inclusive School*. Alexandria, Virginia: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.